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THE GRANGE;
ITS
Origin, Progress, and Educational Purposes.

BY
HON. D. WYATT AIKEN,
OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

READ BEFORE A CONVENTION CALLED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF
AGRICULTURE JANUARY 23d, 1883,

TO CONSIDER THE SUBJECT OF
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY J. A. WAGENSELLER,
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THE GRANGE:

Its Origin, Progress, and Educational Purposes.

MR. PRESIDENT :—The term “Agricultural Education,” selected by you as one of the topics for discussion during this convention, is to my mind indefinable. He who has acquired much knowledge by reading is universally conceded to be an educated man, and such an one may have gathered from books a vast deal of agricultural knowledge, but if he knows little or nothing of the practical application of the many sciences comprehended under the word agriculture, this convention, at least, would not accord to him an “agricultural education.”

On the other hand, hosts of farmers without education, agricultural or otherwise, have attained success in life by applying sound common sense and good judgment to the execution of their plans. Hence, I say the term “agricultural education” is indefinable.

Possibly some of the agricultural colleges of the States of the Union are to-day imparting this species of education to their students, where they have a curriculum for the open field, as well as a curriculum for the school-room; for surely he is acquiring an “agricultural education” who learns the science in the laboratory and immediately applies it upon the farm. But if such a thing is done at the present time it must be of recent origin,

for anterior to 1877 it was a misnomer to call any institution in the United States an agricultural college. Grant, however, that such an education is imparted by our agricultural colleges, it is only to the sons of farmers, and not to farmers themselves, for to most of these latter there were no such times as college days. But it is of the farmers' school I desire to speak—of the Grange—the school-room of the Patrons of Husbandry, where the farmers with their wives and children meet together upon a common footing, “with every barrier to social intercourse thrown aside,” and there endeavor to balance exhaustive labor by instructive social amusements, or attempt to communicate knowledge upon every conceivable subject that pertains to the farm. Upon the origin, progress, and purposes of this organization I now propose to submit a few thoughts.

The Order of the Patrons of Husbandry is still in its minority, if measured by the standard of a human lifetime, and yet its birth and infancy are shrouded behind a palpable veiling of doubt as impenetrable as if it had emerged from the darkness and gloom of the middle ages. Its founders are well-known, and are all living;* but just how much of the structure each one framed or erected, they themselves are unable to inform us. Suffice it to say, that in January, 1866, Mr. O. H. Kelley, a clerk in this Department, was sent upon a mission of some sort through the South by Mr. Newton, the then Commissioner of Agriculture. Kelley journeyed as far south as Charleston, S. C., thence to Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, up the Mississippi to Memphis, across the

* The Rev. A. B. Grosh, one of the seven Founders of the Order, died at Towson, Baltimore County, Md., on Thursday, March 27th, 1884, in the eighty-first year of his age.

country to Atlanta, and back again to Washington City by the 21st day of April following (1866).

Impressed with the disorganization of that peculiarly agricultural section, and grieved at the utter demoralization of its people, whom he found intelligent and trustworthy beyond his anticipations, Kelley conceived the idea that for the resuscitation of the country and the recuperation of its farmers, whose wealth and resources had been swept away by the cruel hand of war, organization was a necessity. This, however, was but a transient thought as applied to the farmers of the South, for a moment's reflection convinced him that there was vital need of organization among the farmers of the Union, North as well as South, and to effect such an end became the thought of his life. He reasoned, that agricultural clubs were neither permanent nor effective; they were ephemeral, and seldom if ever controlled by farmers. State and county fairs were not for farmers alone, but open to the competition of the world. In his soliloquy he queried, why should not farmers join in a league peculiar to themselves, in which others should not be admitted to membership? Such an union would be partizan, and if partizan it should be secret, and if secret it must have a ritual to make it effective and attractive. This process of reasoning rapidly brought him to a conclusion, and forthwith he undertook to execute the ritualistic framework of such an organization. The task was, however, beyond his capacity, and he soon found himself sounding in deep water. But Kelley was a man not easily baffled, so with ardor unabated he resorted to the expedient of advising with counsellors.

Mr. J. R. Thompson, then as now an officer in the Treasury Department, and Mr. William M. Ireland, then

chief clerk in the finance division of the Post-Office Department, to which bureau Kelley had been transferred in the fall of 1866, were two congenial companions whose acquaintance he had made after his return from the South. They were both schooled in the mysteries of Masonry, and the former was a proficient in the composition of ritualistic work. Kelley had no hesitancy in approaching these two friends. They heard his story, and indorsed his efforts, and the trio had repeated consultations upon the subject. Before making visible progress, however, the necessity arose for the counsel of a practical agriculturist.

By common consent, Mr. William Saunders, then as now the skilled and efficient superintendent of the garden and grounds of the Department of Agriculture, was invited to join them, which he did with some misgivings, however, because of the comprehensiveness of the work as he appreciated it.

This quartette, unwilling to pass judgment upon the work of their own minds, invited the Rev. John Trimble, then an officer in the Treasury Department, to exercise the privilege of criticising their labors as they progressed.

After a season, the Rev. A. B. Grosh, then a clerk in the Agricultural Department, and an Odd Fellow of high repute, and Mr. F. M. McDowell, then as now a vineyardist of Wayne, N. Y., and a friend of Mr. Saunders, were induced to labor with the five, and these seven constituted the immortal founders of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, though several mutual friends now unknown to the Order were at sundry times consulted, and suggested much that was valued, but a vast *deal more that was rejected.*

For nearly two years these seven men wrought with an energy unaccountable, and with a faith amounting almost to inspiration, until they completed a well-devised scheme of organization, based upon a ritual of four degrees for men, and four for women, unsurpassed, in my judgment, in the English language for originality of thought, beauty of diction, and purity of sentiment. Having framed a constitution, adapted to this ritual, to govern them, these men met on the 4th day of December, 1867, in the little brown building now standing embowered in the trees on the corner of Four-and-a-half street and Missouri avenue in this city, which was at that time the office of Mr. Saunders; and then and there constituted themselves the *National* Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, with Saunders as master, Thompson as lecturer, Ireland as treasurer, and Kelley as secretary; the remaining offices were left vacant.

What a conception, that seven comparatively humble and unambitious men should presume to style themselves a *National* organization! Was this presumption, was it fanaticism, or was it inspiration?

During the four years next succeeding, their zeal was nothing abated. Their time, their labor, and their scanty cash were all cheerfully given to scatter the seeds of promise far and wide over the Union, for they fervently believed they were casting their bread upon the waters. As an evidence of their faith and enthusiasm Kelley resigned his clerkship and embarked upon a pilgrimage among unknown farmers in the North-west, taking with him neither scrip nor money, for he had neither, and his comrades had none to advance him. The only letter of credit furnished him was a sort of "to all whom it may concern" epistle, which perchance

might be of service to him if he met an acquaintance or friend of either of the seven. They buoyed him, however, upon the eve of his departure, with a fraternal "God bless you and your efforts, Kelley."

Was there ever a better display of self-reliance and fortitude? Kelley had pluck and his comrades confidence, so he went on his way rejoicing. Kelley was scarcely a success, however, as an evangelist, for he organized but one Grange at Harrisburg, Pa.; one at Fredonia, N. Y.; one at Columbus, Ohio, and perhaps one or two others on his way to Northern Minnesota, chiefly in cities where farmers are not wont to congregate to do farm work, and arrived at his former home without a penny in his pocket, his traveling expenses having consumed the charter fee of fifteen dollars, which he received from each Grange organized on his journey, and an occasional pittance received through letters, from his comrades in Washington. Meanwhile these latter were printing and distributing circulars declarative of their object, were issuing copies of their constitution, were printing manuals containing the ritual, and frequently were so destitute of funds that they were unable to pay the postage upon the printed matter they wished to distribute.

In those days the franking privilege was a boon granted for the asking, but never in any instance was this favor requested for a single parcel, nor were alms ever at any time solicited to further their laudable efforts.

During these four years this septuary brotherhood met frequently, and formally once in each year as the National Grange. There is no recorded evidence that a quorum was always present, even at their annual meetings; indeed, quite the contrary is easily proven, for at

the third annual session of the National Grange, Worthy Master Saunders with marked dignity delivered his inaugural in the presence of Secretary Kelley, his entire auditory, and when he concluded asked leave to print in the next morning's daily papers, that the two might buy a few extra copies each, and thus be enabled to circulate their proceedings. Of course leave was granted. The printing was done, and two hundred copies of the morning paper were purchased and distributed at private expense. But the National Grange preserved its dignity, and the founders re-asserted their faith in its perpetuity; a confidence amounting almost to prescience.

The constitution of the Order required that every Subordinate Grange should be composed of at least nine men and four women, and that fifteen such Granges might apply for the organization of a State Grange. In accordance with these provisions, a State Grange was organized in Minnesota on the 23d day of February, 1869, and another in Iowa on the 12th day of January, 1871. On the 3d day of January, 1872, the National Grange met in its fifth annual session, and as an accession to its members hailed with a welcome the presence of Dudley W. Adams, the Master of the State Grange of Iowa, and the first member of the Order who had ever met with the original seven.

Prior to Kelley's missionary excursion to the Northwest, two Subordinate Granges had been organized in Washington City, of good material doubtless, but scarcely such as were required by the constitution, which authorized the initiation of only such as "were engaged in agricultural pursuits." However, these two may without impropriety be said to have been rehearsal Granges, in which the symmetrical fitting together of

the degree work could be experimentally and satisfactorily tested.

Anterior to the fifth session of the National Grange there had been organized in the several States about two hundred Granges, whose charter fees had partially reimbursed the founders the money advanced in the cause, but annual salaries had been promised the master, the secretary, and the treasurer, not a dollar of which could now be paid, for there was as yet not a surplus penny in the treasury. During the year 1872 new life was infused into the Order, and before its close one thousand and seventy-four Granges had been organized, scattered over more than half the States of the Union.

The founders continued to work most assiduously and framed a degree peculiarly suited to the State Grange, and another higher one for the National Grange, and still another for those patrons who had served twelve months or longer in the National Grange. They also appointed deputies to work in the Grange field. Your humble orator was appointed "general deputy for the Southern States."

In the fall of 1872, the secretary mailed to all the masters of the State Granges, to the deputies, and to others who had labored for the cause, a letter of invitation to convene in Georgetown, D. C., on the 8th day of January, 1873, in the sixth annual session of the National Grange. Seventeen delegates, in addition to six of the Founders of the Order, (Bro. Ireland was absent,) representing eleven States, assembled on that day at the place designated, six of whom were masters of State Granges, and the remainder deputies in the Order. In addition to these, four ladies honored the body with their presence, and now for the first time in its history

the National Grange began to assume the proportions of a national organization.

The following were the six Masters: Dudley W. Adams, of Iowa; A. Golder, of Illinois; Thomas Taylor, of S. C.; John Cochrane, of Wis.; Wm. B. Porter, of Neb., and A. J. Vaughan, of Miss. T. A. Thompson was present as a Past Master of Minnesota State Grange, and deputy of the National Grange. The deputies present, were J. C. Abbott, of Iowa; T. R. Allen, of Mo.; D. S. Curtiss, of D. C.; Oscar Dinwiddie, of Ind.; D. A. Robertson, of Minn.; E. R. Shankland, of Iowa; Joseph Seymour, of N. Y.; G. W. Thompson, of N. J.; Wm. D. Wilson, of Iowa, and the writer of this essay. The ladies present, were Mrs. J. C. Abbott, Mrs. D. W. Adams, Mrs. O. H. Kelley, and Miss C. A. Hall.

The long-cherished hopes of the founders were about to be realized. The American farmers were at last aroused from their lethargy, and expressed a willingness to combine together for their mutual benefit and protection. And to accelerate so glorious a consummation, these noble founders, with a magnanimity equaled only by their sincerity, relinquished their claim to this admirably-devised system of organization, and delivered it over with all its franchises—its organic law, its ritual, and the accumulated result of six years of laborious work—as a gratuity to the National Grange as constituted at this its sixth annual session.

Scarcely had acknowledgments been returned for the donation, before the keen blade of revision was thrust into its organic law and many of its patriarchal features rejected, and provisions inserted more in accordance with the spirit of our republican institutions. Every one

present was allowed to vote, and the State of Iowa was accorded five votes, a preponderance she held in the National Grange for several years afterwards.

The sixth session continued for four days, and before adjournment the following officers were elected to serve for three years: Dudley W. Adams, Master; Thomas Taylor, Overseer; T. A. Thompson, Lecturer; A. J. Vaughan, Steward; G. W. Thompson, Assistant Steward; A. B. Grosh, Chaplain; F. M. McDowell, Treasurer; O. H. Kelley, Secretary; Oscar Dinwiddie, Gate Keeper; Mrs. D. W. Adams, Ceres; Mrs. O. H. Kelley, Pomona; Mrs. J. C. Abbott, Flora, and Miss C. A. Hall, Lady Assistant Steward. Wm. Saunders, D. Wyatt Aiken and E. R. Shankland were elected an Executive Committee.

Thus the foundation was laid for active, energetic, progressive work during the succeeding year. The enthusiasm of the founders was imbibed by every delegate present, and each avowed himself a propagandist on his return home. To date (January 12th, 1873,) there had been organized nearly fourteen hundred Granges, more than one-half of which were in the two States of Iowa and South Carolina.

No valid reason was entertained why a majority of the States should not each possess as many as then existed in these two combined. A little more than twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,090) had been received by the treasurer, and expended in distributing circulars, printing manuals and constitutions, and in paying off old debts to the satisfaction of the Grange. But there still remained a debt of \$6,000 due as salaries, which it was then resolved should be liquidated, though the treasury had been exhausted. Everything worked

in perfect harmony, and the labors of the session were closed by the institution of a brotherhood as fraternal as the ties of Masonry, and as binding as the fellowship of the Christian Church. Great prosperity hovered in sight. Hope became confidence, and perseverance a labor of love. "Organize," "organize," "organize," was now the shibboleth of the American farmer. Wherefore? cried the perplexed observer. His inquiry was answered by any and all farmers, who assigned as many reasons for the necessity of organization as there were grievances fancied or real, and of both there were legions. Yet, there was no well-defined general or individual purpose in view among the mass of farmers, save that of organization. It was a partizan affair, and it was secret, and therefore if correctly managed could not fail to benefit the membership. So said the interested parties, without properly appreciating much that was designed by the founders. The delegates to the sixth session of the National Grange themselves entertained but crude ideas of the prospects of the growth and development of the Order, as was evinced by the speech of Brother T. R. Allen, of Missouri, in which, just before adjournment, he besought the Grange with tears in his eyes to meet twelve months hence in Saint Louis, pledging them his utmost efforts to greet them with one hundred Granges. His appeal was heeded. Saint Louis was chosen as the place of meeting in 1874, and when the National Grange assembled there, they received the joyous news that there were over fourteen hundred live, active Subordinate Granges in the State of Missouri alone.

The years 1873 and 1874 were marvelously prosperous years for the Grange. In the former, eight thousand six

hundred and sixty-eight Subordinate Granges were organized; and in the latter, eleven thousand nine hundred and forty-one.

Then it was that in our strength we exposed our weakness; our debts had been paid, and our coffers were full. But we had grown suddenly too rich and powerful. We had leaped from poverty into affluence. From a struggling brotherhood of seven we had developed with magic growth into a fraternity of over twenty thousand Subordinate Granges, averaging a membership of forty, all adults, or well-grown male and female youths, and our numbers were increasing at the rate of thousands a month. But our ranks lacked discipline. Our leaders were afraid of the multitude, and chaos prevailed to a considerable extent throughout the Order.

At the Saint Louis session, in February, 1874, the National Grange issued its first "Declaration of Purposes," a portion of which read as follows:

"We shall endeavor to advance our cause by laboring to accomplish the following objects:

"To develop a better and higher manhood and womanhood among ourselves. To enhance the comforts and attractions of our homes, and strengthen our attachments to our pursuits. To foster mutual understanding and co-operation. To maintain inviolate our laws and to emulate each other in labor, to hasten the good time coming. To reduce our expenses, both individual and corporate. To buy less and produce more, in order to make our farms self-sustaining. To diversify our crops, and crop no more than we can cultivate. To condense the weight of our exports, selling less in the bushel and more on hoof and in fleece; less in lint, and more in warp and woof. To systematize our work, and calculate intelligently on probabilities. To discountenance the credit system, the mortgage system, the

fashion system, and every other system tending to prodigality and bankruptcy.

"We propose meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together, and, in general, acting together for our mutual protection and advancement, as occasion may require. We shall avoid litigation as much as possible by arbitration in the Grange. We shall constantly strive to secure entire harmony, good will, vital brotherhood among ourselves, and to make our Order perpetual. We shall earnestly endeavor to suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices, all unhealthy rivalry, all selfish ambition. Faithful adherence to these principles will insure our mental, moral, social, and material advancement."

At the same time they declared it to be their purpose to bring consumer and producer together; to wage no warfare upon any other interest; to advance the cause of education among the brotherhood and for their children by all the means in their power; to destroy sectionalism, and, last but not least, to inculcate a proper appreciation of the abilities and sphere of woman.

At the Saint Louis session thirty-two States were represented; twelve of them by the masters and their wives, and twenty of them by the masters alone; also one Territory, by the master.

Early in this season of prosperity we were called upon to prove in a most practical manner many of the purposes to which we had given a declaration. The grasshopper plague of the Northwest appeared to be a mysterious Providence sent to test our sincerity. And scarce had we the time to verify our faith by our works, before the father of waters deluged the Southwest, and subjected us to a further test. Appeals for subsistence came, but not in vain, from our brethren in both those

sections; over twenty thousand dollars were taken from our treasury and invested in breadstuffs, provisions, and and planting-seed, which were shipped, freight prepaid (and in many instances no freight was charged either by boat or by railroad), for distribution among Patrons in Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Dakota, Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama.

All the while our members were constantly and daily increasing, our treasury was plethoric, and regularly growing fuller. But to properly appreciate the rapidity and extent, yea, the very enormity of our growth at this time, a few incidental facts may perhaps be properly related here.

For several years consecutively, as soon as practicable after the adjournment of the National Grange, thirty thousand copies of its proceedings, averaging one hundred and fifty pages each, were printed and delivered free of cost to the Subordinate Granges.

Miss C. A. Hall, of Minnesota, who doubtless deserves the credit of suggesting the idea of female membership in the Grange, compiled and secured the copyright of a song-book for the Order, which the National Grange bought for the sum of one thousand dollars, and printed in many consecutive editions of ten thousand copies each.

The Executive Committee, impelled by the necessity of relieving the unlettered farmer, who might be chosen to fill the master's chair of his Grange, from the embarrassment of his own ignorance, attempted to purchase the copyright of Cushing's Manual, that a copy might be placed in the hands of every subordinate master. But failing to negotiate the purchase, they compiled a

“Patron’s Parliamentary Guide,” and circulated fifty thousand copies among the Subordinate Granges.

Newspapers advocating the cause of the Grange sprang into existence in many parts of the Union, and to this day some of them are wielding a mighty influence in behalf of the cause of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry and Agriculture.

Postmasters from all the States informed us that the Order had greatly increased the bulk of their mails, and one said that “there are now thirty newspapers taken at this office, whilst there was but one taken before the establishment of the Grange in this vicinity.” And one clergyman wrote that “since the introduction of the Grange I have seen a remarkable change in the walk and conversation of my flock; they are more careful in their dress and general appearance, and are reading more.”

From every quarter came the Grange call for books, and much money was invested in select libraries for Granges in many of the States.

To every Grange organized the National Grange sent a paraphernalia—a sort of equipment chest, containing materials necessary to an intelligible comprehension of the ritualistic work of the degrees; among other articles was a knife, an implement with which every *laborer* should be provided to remind him “never to break a twig or a flower, but always to cut it smoothly with a knife, so as not to injure the plant.” Thus was he instructed emblematically “in his intercourse with his fellow-beings to correct an error tenderly and with the smooth edge of affection, and never to bruise a wound he wished to heal.” The Executive Committee, to procure the needed supply of these knives, visited the largest cutlery manufacturer in the United States, who, when

told that we wanted ten thousand of these knives, with an expression of astonishment exclaimed, "Gentlemen, do you deal in anything but knives?"

Is it presumption to suggest that the world has never seen a better Educator than the Grange? It takes care of its own, and makes them better men and better woman, and wiser men and wiser women.

But additional incidents may be recited to show how others appreciated the power and influence of the Order in those days of its prosperity, when it held a vantage ground for a short while, and lost it only from lack of education and discipline, perhaps never more to be fully regained.

Confidential price-lists of manufactured articles were issued to the Granges, perhaps once a quarter, in small pamphlets of from eight to ten pages. A leading newspaper in New York City proffered to print and circulate one hundred thousand copies of these price-lists to the Granges, if it were allowed one page for its own advertisement. The postage alone on this circulation in sealed envelopes, as the editor proposed, would have amounted to six thousand dollars, besides the paper and press-work.

A city in the West proffered a splendid building as a donation to the National Grange if they would locate their headquarters permanently within its limits. Another proposed to furnish all necessary office room free of rent, and an annuity of \$5,000 for five years, for the same boon; while the city of Washington, through a company of her best citizens, only wanted to know what other cities would do, that she might "go one better," to prevent the removal of the headquarters or secretary's office.

Transportation companies seeking national legislation; Congressional lobbyists, and every imaginable enterprise that depended for its existence upon public favor, supplicatingly approached the Executive Committee to secure the favorable indorsement of the Order, but without success, for the Grange, actuated solely by principle, ascended a higher plane, and rejected every approach as an insinuation that they were purchasable.

Scarcely had we grown to these huge proportions as an Order before mutterings were occasionally heard like the rumbling of distant thunder, and anon a storm cloud burst upon us which tested the elasticity and strength of our fraternal bonds. Lack of discipline was everywhere manifest. Jealousy and envy began to crop out among the rank and file of the Order, and, rising like a gaunt and bloody spectre, shook their gory locks in the faces of the leaders and demanded a distribution of the funds then in the treasury of the National Grange. To appease this unreasonable demand, the faint-hearted, constituting a majority of the voting members of the National Grange at its eighth session, held in Charleston, S. C., in February, 1875, yielded to the clamor, and voted to disburse gratuitously \$54,825 among the Subordinate Granges throughout the Union. This gave but \$2.50 to each Grange, a sum far too small to be of any material benefit, and therefore the aggregate expenditure of that large amount in this manner was an extravagant squandering of the funds of the National Grange.

Other causes, too, threatened discomfort to the Order at that time. In the confusion of an unprecedented organization we had left the gates ajar, and designing men from every avocation of life had crept into our ranks. Men whose capital was invested in enterprises inimical

to the farmer, and whose farms were perhaps their garden-plots, were received into the Grange under the plea of being interested in "agricultural pursuits." Schemes were devised for engaging in all kinds of manufacture as Patrons. Grange agencies were established in all of our cities, where the agents proposed to serve both producer and consumer, buying in the cheapest market for one, and selling in the highest market for the other, and guaranteeing satisfaction in both cases. Everybody wanted to join the Grange then; lawyers, to get clients; doctors, to get patients; merchants, to get customers; Shylocks, to get their pound of flesh; and sharpers, to catch the babes from the woods.

One Grange was organized on Broadway, New York, with a membership of forty-five, representing a capital of perhaps as many millions, and composed of bank presidents, wholesale dealers, sewing machine manufacturers, and Wall street speculators; the only member who could lay the least claim to having an interest in agriculture being a merchant who owned a house and lot in the White Mountains, where he usually spent his summers. A similar Grange was organized in Boston; and in New Jersey, near New York City, a Grange was found, in fair working condition, with a General of the Army as its master, a stone-mason as its secretary, and the owner of a grain elevator as its chaplain. These wiley men, of course, sapped the very foundation of the Order, and rendered it almost lifeless in more States than one.

The Executive Committee were untiring in their efforts to counteract these depressing influences. Appreciating the completeness of the organization and comprehending the power of numbers, they attempted practically

to execute in every way possible our "declaration of purposes." They visited the manufacturers of the United States who supplied the markets of the country with such articles as farmers needed, from a scooter plow to a six-horse engine or a parlor organ, and explained to them fully the purposes of the Order, proposing to concentrate the purchases of the Grange where the greatest discount was obtained for cash, for the Order countenanced no method of dealing except upon a cash basis. In no individual instance did they fail to secure a reduction of from 25 to 50 per cent. upon the article purchased. These reductions and the amount of our purchase startled the middlemen. Reapers that were selling at \$275 were reduced to \$175; threshers at \$300 were bought for \$200; wagons that had been selling for \$150 fell in price to \$90; sewing machines that commanded \$75 and \$100 fairly tumbled to \$40 and \$50. And so with every implement that came within the wants of the Patrons.

These reduced prices were secured under the seal of the Grange, and were enjoined upon all members of the Order as "confidential," when printed in the price-lists already alluded to. But the greed of avarice was incapable of secrecy, and covetous Patrons, hoping to obtain still better bargains, revealed to outsiders these contracts between manufacturers and themselves, and thereby damaged both of the contracting parties. One point, however, was gained, for the reduction in price once secured was never lost.

The Executive Committee attempted also to inaugurate a system of crop reports, which, after a trial of only six months, proved more reliable, more expeditious, and more satisfactory than any system then in operation or

since devised by the Agricultural Department of the Government.

It was as follows: The Subordinate Granges were requested to meet as nearly as practicable on the first day of the month. There were then twenty-five thousand Subordinate Granges scattered throughout the Union, and located in every State but Rhode Island, which never has had a Grange upon its soil. Twenty-five thousand circulars were then printed, containing questions concerning the farm and its products, with sufficient blank space for answers to these questions. One of these circulars was mailed to each Subordinate Grange early enough to insure its reception before the monthly meeting. Anticipating this circular, each Patron went to his Grange session prepared to answer as far as practicable all questions pertaining to his farm or his neighbors' farms, when the latter were not members of the Order. Immediately upon the assembling of the Grange each member reported to the secretary, who, after adjournment, collated and compiled these reports and transferred his aggregated result to the printed circular, which he mailed to the Executive Committee at Washington City. By the 15th of the month these reports, or a majority of them, were received by the Executive Committee. A sufficient force was engaged to make a compilation of them, which was transferred to an aggregated sheet, and this sheet at once printed, and as soon as practicable mailed to the Granges in an envelope containing another sheet of questions, so that the Grange at its next monthly meeting received the consolidated report of the first circular and also another series of questions different from the first, but all pertaining to the farm and its crops. The National Grange paid all the

expenses of the system, including the postage upon the replies returned from the Subordinate Granges. As an evidence of our expedition we reported on the first day of a certain month in 1874 that Pennsylvania grew more wheat per acre, and New Hampshire more corn per acre, than any other States in the Union, and thirty days thereafter the Agricultural Department of the Government reported the same facts as original discoveries. The theory of our system was perfect, but its execution was too expensive for private enterprise. More than once were we hindered in our progress by the inability of the Government to supply us with postpaid envelopes as rapidly as wanted. In those days the Post-Office Department of this city extended us the courtesy of sending their wagon daily to Grange headquarters for our mail.

The Executive Committee also published for the use of the Grange a set of co-operative rules, based upon the Rochdale system of co-operation, which were greedily clutched at by the Order, but were not universally utilized because of the opposition of the Grange agencies previously established upon a commission or joint-stock plan. To master the Rochdale system we procured all their publications, which brought us into communication with the co-operators of England, who became inquisitive about the Patrons of Husbandry, thus effecting a correspondence which resulted in our sending a deputy to England, who introduced the Order there, and organized some Subordinate Granges among the farmers of that country. Subsequently the English co-operators sent three of their best representative men to the United States, authorized to effect, if possible, a reciprocity system of exchange of products with the

Patrons of Husbandry. That commission and the Executive Committee of the National Grange held consultations at Washington, Saint Louis, Louisville, and Atlanta, which resulted in a proposition from them, that they would erect their own warehouses in New York City, Norfolk, Charleston, and New Orleans, and supply them with every article of clothing and every farm implement needed by Patrons, and sell the same to Patrons at a discount of 10 per cent. less than the same articles of like quality could be bought for in this country, and that they would receive in exchange every variety of farm product at the ruling market price, *provided* the Patrons of Husbandry would concentrate their purchases upon the Rochdale co-operators. This proposition was not rejected from any patriotic motive, but it was not entertained, because the Executive Committee were not competent to control the purchases or sales for a single Subordinate Grange.

The consequence of our efforts at co-operation was the establishment in many of the States of the Union of co-operative stores, some of which are quietly but certainly saving to-day thousands of dollars to their customers.

In its incipency, the Grange movement was not popular in many sections of the United States, even among farmers, and notably was this the case in the South. For a few years succeeding the war that people were greatly harassed by secret political associations, which had a tendency to widen the breach, if any existed, between the races. The Grange, being secret and confined to one class of citizens, was accused of introducing political machinations, that augured trouble to the community; hence many citizens, not a few of whom were

farmers, discouraged its introduction. Other farmers, South as well as elsewhere in the United States, condemned the Grange as a woman's rights institution, because women were received as voting members into the Order, while thousands everywhere, with significant emphasis exclaimed, "What do farmers want with women in a secret society?" And yet still others of peculiar religious idiosyncrasies, (and not Romanists either), set their faces against any and all secret associations of any character or for any purpose whatsoever.

There was little difficulty in removing most of these objections when an opportunity was afforded to explain the purposes of the Order, for although upon the surface there appeared obstacles in the path of the organizer, there was apparent to every observant man a readiness, a willingness, yea, an anxiety in the agricultural mind of the country for organization of some sort. The Grange literally "filled the bill," for its constitution positively inhibited the discussion of political or religious subjects during its sessions; it did not ask the farmer to *send* his wife or daughter to the Grange, but invited, yes, urged him to bring them, and thus protect himself against evil and vicious associations, for where woman graces an assemblage with her presence, virtue presides; and our esoteric cavillers were easily silenced by the assurance that a semblance of secrecy was necessary to let farmers in and keep non-farmers out; but it was a mere semblance, for the secrecy did not extend beyond "a ceremony of initiation, which binds us in mutual fraternity as with a band of iron, but although its influence is so powerful, its application is as gentle as that of the silken thread that binds a wreath of flowers."

With these cobwebs swept aside, it was amazing how

rapidly the scales fell from the eyes of our inquisitors. From the Potomac to the Rio Grande, from the Golden Gate to the Hudson, and even on into the pineries of Maine, and across the border, throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion of Canada, farmers fairly leaped, as with one preconcerted bound, to the upholding of the Grange standard.

I have already confessed my inability to define the term "agricultural education;" with humility I make the further confession, as a representative farmer, that an agricultural education, however defined, is not an accomplishment possessed by the average American farmer, and further that the shrewder, quicker, more crafty, and perhaps better educated classes of American citizens are neither professional nor practical farmers. And where farming and planting is the avocation of a majority of our citizens, I know it is almost impossible to say who is, or even who is not "interested in agricultural pursuits," to use the language of the Grange constitution. Hence, with the public mind ready and waiting to seize upon some form of organization, as it was in 1873 and 1874, and with the hurly-burly rush of this majority class into an association admitting all who were "interested in agricultural pursuits," the wonder to my mind is, that the Grange was not perverted from its legitimate purposes by the admission of those whose entrance to the fold, if not sought for sinister ends, was certainly not intended for the aggrandizement of the farmer or his vocation. Frequently had the Grange to bear the odium of other men's sins, when denied the opportunity of correcting a misguided public opinion. For instance, there existed in Illinois and Wisconsin or other sections of the North-west at sundry times, agri-

cultural clubs, composed of men who could not or would not join the Grange, whose province seemed to be to wage war against transportation companies. Anathemas thick and heavy were hurled upon the Grange for making this attack, whereas every Patron of Husbandry knew that the Grange, as such, was not a participant in the fight from beginning to end. To say that Patrons did not sympathize with and rejoice at the result of this contest would be admitting their complaint of grievances as ill-founded; but as an organization, they could not have participated, for such a course would have been in violation of their organic law.

The keel of the Grange ship was well laid. Its majestic sides were ribbed by the mechanism of profound thought. Its spars braced by fraternal cords have never been shattered by the fury of the storm. Its sails are still whole, and have been whitened by the friction of popular criticism. Often has it buoyed in turbid waters. Still oftener has it glided gracefully and triumphantly over the billows of prejudice that lashed so furiously under its bow. To-day it floats in placid waters. Its haven has not yet been reached, nor will it be until every farmer in the land shall have received some of the benefits of its launching.

The harvest of improvement which the American farmers reaped during the prosperous era of the Grange, and which is still ripening in every State of this Union, cannot be limited to a monetary valuation. The social elevation, the moral improvement, and the educational advancement have been beyond comprehension. These three grand purposes are never ignored, nor forgotten, from the moment the initiate closes behind him the outer door of the Grange hall, until by death or from other

causes he dissolves his connection with the Order. Every precept of the Order is elevating and improving. The steps taken by the applicant in his passage through the four degrees that must be conferred upon him before he is acknowledged to be a Patron of Husbandry in good standing—all have this tendency. He who enters the fold must begin with the rudiments of his vocation, and be taught that “he who will not plow by reason of the cold shall beg in the harvest, and have nothing.”

Beginning as the humble *Laborer*, who clears the forest, or digs the ditch, or prunes the vine, or turns the sod, he is instructed that all honest labor is honorable, and has the doctrine inculcated on him that he must “drive the very plowshare of thought through the heavy soil of ignorance, and thus prepare the mind for the growth of knowledge and wisdom.” Advancing one degree he becomes a *Cultivator*, when his moral nature is educated and refined by repeated assurances, that he who intelligently cultivates the growing plant is brought into close companionship with his Creator. “As we see the beautiful transformation of seeds into attractive plants, we have but another lesson taught us of the wondrous works of God; and if the beauties of this world, when rightly viewed, offer so much of the magnificence of the Creator to charm us here, what must be the sublime grandeur of that Paradise above, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens?”

Nor do the lessons of encouragement cease when the *Harvester* is warned that he must reap for the mind as well as for the body, because nature has made nothing in vain. “Wherever she has made a habitation, she has filled it with inhabitants. On the leaves of plants animals feed, like cattle in our meadows, to whom the dew

drop is an ocean without a shore; the flowers are their elysian fields, decorated with cascades, and flowing with ambrosial fluids." Hence, the *Harvester's* duty is to cultivate an observing mind, for it is delightful to acquire knowledge, and much more so to diffuse it.

But he who harvests must not rest content, until he has by lawful means attained to ownership of the products of his toil, and thus become an *Husbandman*; who, while he was passing practically through the hardships of a farmer's life, and has had them emblematically rivited upon his moral nature, has learned to look with careful solicitude upon children and to encourage in them a love of rural life, by making its labors cheerful, for what children see makes the most lasting impression upon them. "We may tell them of the pleasures and independence of the farmer's life; but if their daily intercourse with us shows it to be tedious, irksome, and laborious, without any recreation of body or mind, they will soon lose all interest in it and seek employment elsewhere. We should therefore strive to make our homes more attractive. We should adorn our grounds with those natural attractions which God has so profusely spread around us, and especially should we adorn the family circle with the noble traits of a kind disposition, fill its atmosphere with affection, and thus induce children to love it."

But the attractions of a farmer's life are not within the keeping of the *Husbandman* alone. It is not his exclusive prerogative to fashion and shape the character of those plastic youths, who in the future are to wield the destiny of our country. It is the mother's influence that moulds the child into noble manhood or bewitching womanhood. Therefore the founders of the Grange,

